

THE MODS

The Mods were a four-piece Toronto punk band from the late-70s with a unique look and sound. They added another inspiring dimension to the Toronto scene with the killer 45 *Step Out Tonight* and the 1985 CD release *Twenty 2 Months*, both long out of print. There was also their inclusion on the extremely rare *Last Page* LP and appearance in the obscure Collin Brunton film of the same name. The following interview was conducted by Greg Pick, the singer of the *Learn Dates*, and took place one week prior to their reunion gig. Scott Marks, the guitar player, and David Quinton, the drummer, were interviewed on *Equalizing Distort* radio. All photos and images courtesy of David Quinton.



That's not what it was when it started. For us, in '77, everything from Elvis Costello to the Police to Talking Heads to Patti Smith to Television to the Dead Boys was all considered punk. Basically, any band that played simple raw punk music and wasn't caught up in the corporate rock scene was considered a punk band and a new wave band. So it's funny, even the Androids, they had punk-ish leanings but it wasn't punk in the sense that people think of it now.

MRR: How did you guys get turned on to punk? Where did you hear about it?

Scott: I think my first experience wasn't going to see punk rock. I saw Patti Smith play Massey Hall on the *Horses* tour. I was interested in Patti Smith mostly from reading *Rolling Stone* where they were talking about Patti Smith playing the Bottom Line and all these places in New York and everyone, from the folk scene to every scene, was thinking about Patti Smith. And that show at Massey Hall was incredible. I remember buying tickets and we ended up with floor seats halfway back. I think we were the only two who knew who Patti Smith was. But I didn't know what it was called at the time. To me they were just a great rock band. And then I remember reading the article in *Rolling Stone* about the Pistols. It was all about their secret tour, the Spots tour where the Sex Pistols were on tour secretly. That article just fascinated me. Talking to Greg and Mark at the time, it was before we had really gotten involved with David, it made sense that this is where we had to go. What we were doing was just not making any sense. It was a slow evolution. We started hanging out at Records on Wheels downtown. Seeing the Jam at the Colonial was definitely a turning point for all of us and we realized we can play this, we can do this. We could probably do it better than some of the people out there and we can write this stuff.

Dave: When you talk about the first exposure to punk or what got us interested, you know

you have defining moments in your life when you remember things especially from your teen years and I remember my first exposure to it like it was yesterday. I was watching a TV show and they had this segment on the Damned from England and they showed them doing their photo session and they were putting brown paper bags on their heads.

MRR: That was a single cover for "Neat Neat Neat."

Dave: Yeah exactly, and I had never seen anything so outrageous in my life. That was at a time when rock bands were supposed to look pretty and everything was Elton John and Boston and all that kind of crap, and just to see these guys putting bags on their heads... It was outrageous for 1976-'77. I got interested in it and the next thing I did was pick up a Viletones single downtown—"Screaming Fist." And then I just started buying 45s of all these different bands. I think the first punk album I actually bought was the Dead Boys record, which was one of my favorite ones.

MRR: Yeah, the Damned record came out... I think that was actually the first "punk" record and back then especially in the earliest days there really wasn't a lot to choose from. I mean, if you bought compilation records, you had stuff like Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

Scott: Or Eddie and the Hot Rods.

MRR: Yeah, Eddie and the Hot Rods. Those guys were wearing bellbottoms. They did have some cool songs. "Do Anything You Wanna Do" is a pretty cool track.

Dave: Well, a lot of bands went through transformations just like them...

MRR: I was going to ask you about Bookies in Detroit. Tell us about it now. What was Bookies like?

Scott: Still the strangest club experience of my whole life. Bookies was located close to the university, but was also the local transvestite bar.

MRR: That always makes for a good mix.

Scott: So it was the university students into punk and new wave, and transvestites. I know my ex-wife, my girlfriend at the time, went into the washroom and

there was as many guys facing the toilets at the stalls with their mini skirts on... Do you remember the women who ran the door that had a shotgun across her lap? I mean, it was just the most bizarre experience playing at Bookies.

MRR: And Detroit has quite a few crazy characters running the streets, so...

Scott: We were there for two or three nights and I just remember

I liked the guys and I liked what they were doing musically and I was really excited about it. We did our first gig September '78 at the Hotel Isabella.

MRR: That was the first place the Mods played?

Dave: Well, with me. That was the first gig I played with the band.

Scott: I remember playing the Isabella. I had no idea that was the first one with you.

MRR: Dave, you were in the Androids originally as we said earlier with Bart and Sally who originally had a band called the Concorde. When you were in the Androids were you in the Qute first and then you joined the Androids?

Dave: No. Actually, it was the other way around. I was in the Androids and our first singer was Ruby T.

MRR: ...who was on the cover of the Last Pogo record, for all you kids trying to figure out who Ruby T is.

Dave: She was really a fun girl. She was Mike Nightmare's girlfriend, the singer for the Ugly, and then when the Concorde broke up, Sally joined us and the band was kind of weird and dark and strange. I didn't love the experience, if you know what I mean. And after the Androids broke up, that's when I put together the Qute. And the Qute were together for three or four months, during the time that I was hanging out pretty heavily with the Mods and getting to know these three crazy bastards from Scarborough.

Scott: That's when I recall seeing you guys at the Bev and Vince was your drummer then.

Dave: I was singing.

MRR: Was the Qute a punk band, or...

Dave: Power pop, punk band. You know what's funny is when we talk about punk nowadays everybody thinks of mohawks and pins and this hyper-fast music.



the night, there was a bunch of people from the hotel or the bar that came over and were drinking Wild Turkey straight, and I just remember the one guy guzzling Wild Turkey. I was in awe.

Dave: That's what you inspire to.

MRR: So you guys played Backlike three nights with Teenage Head.

Scott: The first time we did Backlike was in our own. The second time was in that summer of '72. We did a number of gigs in the States. We did Huerfano in New York. Went in to Philly, I don't remember the name...

Dave: That's O.K. In Cleveland, the place we played in Philly was the Hot Club. The Hot Club was unbelievable. It was all cement. It was a cement floor, cement walls, it was really hot. I don't think I played there a couple of times.

Scott: And then we went to Chicago. The first time we played in Chicago was really weird. We played that night in the night and the next night we played, and then at Mather's. And then the next time when we played with Teenage Head.

Dave: All I remember from that one was that it was our first gig in Chicago, and it was the first time I ever saw that guy Jim Siskish, who put out all those of his records. That really weird looking dude with the big nose.

Scott: What I remember—I have a few memories of Chicago. I remember being very, very, very, very hungry in Chicago because we hadn't eaten in three days or we had been in there because we played Cleveland and I think there was six people there. Us and Teenage Head. At that time Teenage Head were really fucking in. In fact, they were starting to fill the record stores, but once you get a sixth of the record store, you remember the Price's. Dave? I remember being and check and a girl coming at me.

Scott: I was just asking us if we didn't.

Bob Seger: They had no idea. And I think, generally speaking, any of the cities we went to in the States, with the exception of New York, were far behind the Toronto scene. The Toronto scene was really healthy at the time.

MRR: Well, you guys were actually quoted as saying after playing New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, and Detroit that you realized how much further ahead the Toronto scene was.

Dave: I think that's right. I think Toronto has had periods in its history where its been ahead of the times and other times in history where it hasn't been, when it has been other cities in the US or whatever, but yeah.

MRR: What other local bands did you guys find inspiring?

Scott: Like I said, I was a big fan of the G-Troys.

MRR: Where did you first see them play?

Scott: The first time I saw the G-Troys was at the Horseshoe, and I guess what I really found refreshing about them was the fact that you could tell they had some musical backgrounds. Jimmy was a great lyricist, a great melodic lyricist, and he had such a great stage presence. I mean, to me they had folk or country background. And there was something about the way they listened. It was something about the junk stuff. They were probably one of my favorite Toronto bands of the time. The G-Troys I liked as well.

Dave: I think all the guys in our band really liked Jimmy and the G-Troys. I know Greg did a lot and Mark did a lot. So I think we did. We used to play with them sometimes.

Scott: And when we split up, I joined a band and called it the Sals. For a while, it was a great experience.

Dave: There were two awful lot of countries Toronto bands in those days.

Scott: There was the first wave. I don't know if you guys caught anything like Oh These Things, Z-Z-z, the Gods...

Dave: I saw the Gods. They used to play at the two summer times. And I know what I really liked was the Government.

MRR: Yeah, I loved the Government.

Dave: I liked Andy Paterson. I thought he was a really interesting character. I liked their songs. I thought they were cool.

Scott: The Sonics were an interesting band, but I really missed the two but I liked their rock and roll stuff.

MRR: Yeah, they had a record out on Radio Records and actually I remember hearing a story about them recently. There was a concert promoter in Toronto who came up around the late '70s named Ernie Loeble and I remember the Sonics opened for a band called the New York

Nigger at the Horseshoe and it was the same time that the Gary's had the Edge and after that gig the Gary's apparently wouldn't book the Sonics anymore. And I was actually going to ask you guys, I know you guys started playing Larry's Hideaway in '75.

MRR: Yeah. Now I think that was the same time as the Edge. Did that run into any problems for you? Were you guys getting gigs at the Edge?

Scott: No, the Gary's were always really good with us.

Scott: They were good with us. We just grew up with them, and I don't think they minded that we played other places in town.

Dave: Larry's is like a... with grass in it.

Scott: I know, I worked the line there. The first Gary's show that we... that was with the Sals at the Horseshoe. That was just an awesome show. It was a great night. It was sunny. It was hot. That's the show that stands out of our memory.

MRR: Yeah, the floor in there is like a trampoliner. Kind of like the Commodore in Vancouver. Now, the Mode had a very unique sound that was unlike any of the other Toronto bands. How would you guys describe yourselves as being a part of that scene?

Dave: I think we were a punk power pop band. I don't think we were a punk band. We played pop music. We had a harmonic, but we played very, very aggressively. And I think the punk stuff was in there. So, my stomach was... I don't think we were a punk band either. We were somewhere in the middle.

Scott: Yeah, we were in the middle. I was the punk but there was a more than influence as well. But I think the studio stuff was never recorded. In fact, I still find the live stuff my favorite. And the studio stuff that was recorded is a kind of pain.

Dave: Yeah, I agree.

THE MODS
LARRY'S HIDEAWAY
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MRR:
It was
interesting,
Mickey De
Sadiat of the
Forgotten Rebels
was making fun
of you guys in the
Last Pogo film. I was
wondering what your
reaction to that was.

Dave: The Forgotten Rebels weren't good enough to play at the Last Pogo. That's why they weren't there.

Scott: After they magic marked my house on Main Street. That was the first time I had met the Forgotten Rebels. We had done a gig downtown and I was renting a house on Main Street. A bunch of people came back there and there was this Johnny Rotten look-alike, who was Mickey of course, and in the morning we woke up and there was all these Forgotten Rebels things written in magic marker all over the house. So he didn't really ingratiate himself.

MRR: But he did go and see the Mods a lot.

Dave: Yeah, we used to see Mickey at Mods gigs and I've always quite liked him. I think he is great and I think their band has always been good and done some good things and he has hung in there a really, really long time.

MRR: They've never broken up. He's a great guy. He's got a sense of humor in him. He used to rub the Toronto people the wrong way. It seemed like it.

Dave: When he said that about us in the Last Pogo movie I never took offense to it at all.

Scott: I thought it was hilarious.

Dave: I always thought it was very funny and that he had a very sharp wit. I never took offence to it whatsoever.

MRR: Your first gig was at the Horseshoe with the Jumpers and the Vilatones. How did the crowd react to you guys?

Scott: June '78.

Actually the crowd... I think we literally came from nowhere and people weren't expecting anything

and I honestly think we blew them away that night. To this day I have never been so scared. Nicky was on drums at the time. We had just revamped the band. We had been rehearsing for about a month. We had a set. The first song we opened with was "Substitute" and literally I remember us being up on stage and people had told us "You guys looked scared shitless" and we were. We were scared. We didn't know what was going to happen. And we did it and the place, literally, you could see people stopping and turning and watching because we had been playing together for a year and a half. We could play. We were tight. Musically we were tight. We had vocal harmonies. It was a great reaction we got an encore that night. And from there on, Gary Cromier, I remember him coming up and saying "I want to book you guys again." It was immediate. And I remember we drank for two nights after that, we were just so happy about it.

MRR: You guys built up a following pretty quickly it seemed like.

Scott: Within two months. I mean, it was unheard of and it was weird. It was really weird.

MRR: Now, you guys were talking about the Philips Building, the old warehouse where you guys practiced. The Ugly practiced there too and I know Dave, you told me a story about the Ugly, that some of the gear might have been found or borrowed and you were telling me about a few constables coming down looking for Mr. Nightmare.

Dave: Well, it was really weird because the Philips Building was a little refuge for all these bands and nobody from the outside would ever really come in. One day these plainclothes policemen came and they were looking for guys from the Ugly and I remember them questioning Sam and asking whether he had receipts for equipment and Nightmare had sort of run outside and gotten onto the roof and taken off. Yeah, it was one of my memories of that place because I hadn't really seen that sort of thing before. At 17 years old I hadn't been exposed to that kind of stuff. And I also remember the Diodes very

distinctly rehearsing because they were doing rehearsals for their first album at the time with their producer Bob Gallow and I used to go into the room once and a while and listen to them and kind of watch what a supposedly real record producer would do with the band and their music. The one thing that kind of freaked me out was I was in the room when

he suggested they change lyrics for one of their songs. They used to have a song called "Jerry Hall" and Bob Gallow—he was sort of this discovery guy, you know, with his shirt undone and a big medallion and stuff—he looks at them and goes "Who's Jerry Hall?" and they kind of laughed and they said "It's Bryan Ferry's girlfriend" and of course we all knew of her as Bryan Ferry's girlfriend in those days, and he said "Well, you know, nobody knows who Jerry Hall is so I think you guys should change the name to something like 'China Doll'" and of course they did change the name of the song to "China Doll." That's the way they recorded it, but to me it was always "Jerry Hall."

MRR: It's funny considering how popular Jerry Hall is now, especially with her own reality TV show.

Scott: They were there the first night we played the Horseshoe, because I remember Cato coming down to the dressing room after and he kept looking at me and pointing at his Townsend button because I was playing a gold Les Paul with a Hi-watt amp, which I didn't do for any particular purpose other than I bought them together off a guy used. I'm going "Yeah, well..." and of course it was Townsend's signature thing.

MRR: It wasn't Mike Nightmare, was it? (loads of laughter)

Scott: No, it wasn't. Thank goodness.

MRR: What Toronto clubs did the Mods play?

Scott: We did the Horseshoe, we did the Turning Point, Larry's...

Dave: The Edge

Scott: Isabella.

MRR: No one seems to mention the Cheetah Club much. I know you guys played there. Tell me about the Cheetah Club. Where was it?

Scott: Cheetah was on Isabella almost at the corner of Isabella and Yonge on the south side and it had been a disco. In the heart of the disco era it had been a hardcore disco with the glass tables and these little loungey things. It was as far removed from a punk bar as you could get. You know, going from the Horseshoe, which was your typical beer-swilling place, to the Cheetah, which opened up to some punk bands who immediately started to destroy it. That's what I remember.

THE EDGE
MARCH

there was a lot of violence in the end. I guess they remember how there were times at the end of every show where there was a fight?

Scott: Well that's how you know it was a real fight.

Dave: Yeah, they were ready to do the place.

Scott: In Ottawa we played the Rikers Club and that was hilarious. We were right at the end of the show.

MRR: You were playing with the Bureaucrats at that gig I think because they actually wrote about it.

Scott: Is that right?

MRR: Yeah, yeah.

Dave: They probably asked for us.

Scott: And finally, there was no stage, you just played at the end of a room in the club and they were all going in front of us and I remember the one guy being was and I was being in my guitar and then all of a sudden Mark says "If the stage puts his boss down and attacked this guy and I'll now unscrew."

MRR: Who was pouring beer on your guitar? Was it a guy from another band?

Scott: No, a guy from the audience, but Mark was our fighter.

Dave: Scott is not telling the whole story here. The guy said "I sprayed beer on him first and Scott was warning him. You can't do that and you said 'If you do that night, I'll kill you!'" and then the guy did it again and Mark hit him and this huge fight ensued. Again, me and Greg, being the tough guys in the band, we kind of went out the back door because it got really rough. There was a small little place.

MRR: When you guys were playing Ottawa, was there much of a crowd there?

Scott: Yeah, it was packed. This sounds like there was really good.

Dave: It was a good scene. It was very, very unforgotten because Ottawa was Ottawa. It was a Government town. A university town. But they had this really strong, very unforgotten scene. But we had a very strong set of experiences there. Not only that but fight, but I got hit with a bottle and a chair called the Black Swan. And it was a guard. I hear that was full, you know.

MRR: Like those big ones that they had at the Glenworks?

Dave: Yeah, it was a guy from a motorcycle gang that hit just walked in and picked it up and...

Scott: Well, you used to be in the night and you had to deal. I mean, it's like, you play for the people when they had 120 people in the hall, and we would walk out playing our own stuff and that's what the situation was. The Black Swan was not a punk club but they were trying to be a punk club and when they didn't like it they just killed it.

Dave: Yeah, they tried to kill me. I was knocked out and I had to go to the hospital. It was pretty bad. My other four ribs missing. Well actually, no, I have four ribs missing. My memory is that I don't like to discuss, but my second four ribs missing is if Scott at the Jackson Arms Hotel.

Scott: (laughing) And you want to discuss that?

Dave: Well you might know that Hotel. It's in the '60s and it was called Hotel Ticks, right?

MRR: Yeah.

Dave: So it was the Hotel Ticks.

Scott: The 10 Kennedy sometimes they get mixed up then and on a cruise the elevator is at 20 in the morning with Mark. Cruise is probably the wrong choice of words.

Dave: Yeah, you were not cruising.

Scott: The joke was that the elevator goes to at 20 in the morning with me. It's not Mark on it, and this guy is walking by the elevator and he's talking to me and he's talking with us. And I'm thinking, "Why would any guy in his right mind get into an elevator with a naked guy?" Anyways, it turns out that he is the house detective. So the elevator goes to the basement where we are with just passing ourselves laughing and we get off and melancholy walk away, and that's when he hit me. So you see, we had to be the slides. I'm up and lights and stairs and stairs and stairs and get into it and the guy caught Mark on the side and then because he was sitting like a chimney and Mark was totally wild. He couldn't get away.

Dave: It's funny. Every time the Mods went out it was a one-kind of adventure. It was very funny and I think it has something to do with the way we were as a band, but also our age because unlike a lot of the punk guys who were 30 years old and pretending to be 19 or 20, we were young.

MRR: Well, you were young.

Dave: And so was Mark and Greg, and Scott was just a little bit older than us. We were young guys so when we went away out of town away from our families and our parents and whatever, we would go crazy. I think that we never got in trouble, never got arrested, never got in neckties or whatever. We would go into this little van with all of our equipment. I mean, the first time we came out of this stuff alive is amazing, and the whole we

EXPLODES THE MODS
LARRY'S INDEMNITY
Carlton and Larry
87.28

THE MODS
ONE NIGHT ONLY

would stay in Chicago and Detroit and New York... it's unbelievable we came out of it alive. We weren't staying at the friggin' Waldorf.

MRR: Now you guys were talking about... Beck to the Cheetah Club, you were saying Stiv Betors came to see you play there. That must have made you feel pretty good to have somebody with that high of a profile would have come and seen you.

Dave: Well it's funny because Batons and Leckie were at a Mods Turning Point gig that we did, and they both came on stage and did "Teli Me," the old Stones song, with us.

MRR: Three singers?

Dave: The Dead Boys and the Mods had both done "Teli Me," so Greg and Stiv and Leckie sang it together. But I didn't talk to Batons at all that night. I didn't talk to him until the Cheetah Club gig and he came up to me afterwards and he was so drunk he could barely stand up and all I remember him

saying is "You've got to play with me." And I was like "Uh huh." (hesitantly) And he was like "I'm going to call you. I'm doing this record and you'll come and play on it." And I was like "whatever." Then I didn't hear from him for five months.

MRR: Then you ended up playing in his solo band and on his album of which you contributed a song "Make up Your Mind." Did you write it for Stiv?

Dave: I wrote it for Stiv. I wrote it when we were all living in Ohio and writing for his solo album, and he recorded it and then when I did my solo record in 1980 I re-did it. Scotty came in and did guitar on it.

MRR: Beautiful. So you guys kept in touch. Now Stiv, he knew a lot of people in Toronto, so he was close to Steve Leckie (of the Viletones)?

Dave: I don't know that he was close with him. I know he knew him. And Batons had a funny tendency of making fun of people that were very intense. So the more intense you were, the more he made fun of you. He knew that I liked Leckie and I liked the Viletones and stuff, so he used to try and poke fun at me. He used to write letters to me and stuff saying "How is Nancy Dog and the V-Tones?" And used to tell me that I should start a band called David and the Quintones. The funny thing is that Batons was much older than me. He was born in 1949 so he is a child of the '50s and early '60s, so a lot of his humor was that kind of stuff. Like plays on words and making fun of you like "You were in a doo-wop band." So I think when he would make fun of Leckie, it was all like that. Like in good spirit. I think he liked Steve and I think he liked the Viletones, but the more Batons liked something the more he made fun of it. That's how he was.

MRR: What is the song "The Other Side" about?

Scott: Greg wrote the lyrics for that, and that was definitely a song about the hypocrisy of the downtown punkers. I mean the reality was... Steve Leckie, the first time he came out to hear us in Greg's basement, we were driving out to Scarborough and Steve's going "Wow man, like I am out in the country" and of course Steve went to Midland Collegiate down the road from where we grew up. "I'm from the other side." I can't even remember the lyrics, but it is basically you live downtown, you talk like

you're a street person, but the reality is you're just like us. You're from Scarborough. You're from North York. You're a poseur.

Dave: I think the more I came

to realize over the years, I concluded that it's not where you come from and it's not your education level and it's not the community that you grew up in. It's a feeling that you have. If you have that same feeling, you come together and enjoy the same kind of music and might enjoy the same kind of scenes together. It doesn't matter where you come from. So people who were trying to say "I'm like this and you're not, so you can't be a real punk or you can't be a real this or a real that" it's really just a crock of bullshit. People come together because of what they like. People come together because of a commonality and a community of feeling.

MRR: Tell us about your 45.

Scott: The 45 was recorded in late November of '78. A couple of nights at Comfort Sound up at Dufferin and Rogers Road...

Dave: For \$120.

Scott: We did a basic bad track with everyone playing. We did a guitar overdub then we threw the vocals on it. We pressed a thousand copies with the picture sleeve and they sold out very quickly. They were selling them at the Record Peddler at the time and Records on Wheels. They got around the country a little bit but it wasn't the distribution you could get today. The first time it was ever played before it was released on vinyl was we had gone to see Elvis Costello play at the O'Keefe Battered Wives were opening the show, that would have been November, and Mark and Greg and I went to the early show. He did two shows that night. From there we went over to the Horseshoe and got over there at about 10:00 and the Police were playing the Horseshoe. The first Toronto appearance by the Police.

MRR: I was at that gig.

Scott: Well, there wasn't many people there.

MRR: It's funny, because the amount of people that said they were there...

Scott: it would have been pecked.

MRR: I came into Toronto with my friend John Rudyk to buy a Bryan Ferry album, because records came out a week earlier in Toronto than they did in Hamilton, and we had come in and we were in town that night and we went down to the Horseshoe and there was a little color picture on the door and it said "Tonight from England the Police at the Horseshoe" and we thought, what the hell, we'll go in. I didn't like them. I thought they sounded like Styx because he had such a high voice. There was no one in the place and he had this green jumpsuit on with zippers on it and stuff and it really wasn't my bag.

Scott: The person doing the sound for the Police that night was Nesh the Slash. I went over because I was standing beside the soundboard and he gets talking to me and he says to me "You're in the Mods" and I said "Yeah" and we got talking. Anyways, that night in the Horseshoe they played "Step Out Tonight" on cassette in between the sets for the Police.



Yes, Yards. And in fact they are more representative of what the "land" would look like then. There are a lot of them in that part of the land, similar conditions. The section is a good

your name to the News. Why did you do that?

Scott: Well, the whole Mod revival thing was coming out of England. Greg and Mark had gone over to England in that summer of '79 and they had come back and everything was mod. It was like calling yourselves the Rock and Rolls. It didn't make any sense anymore. It was probably the right thing to do at the time but the wrong thing to do in retrospect. And the News was an OK name until Huey Lewis took it.

MRR: Did the News sound any different from the Mods?

Scott: No, it was a name change only. It had nothing to do with musically. I don't think. It was strictly to do with the Mod revival that was happening in England. It was a name that wasn't going to fly outside of here.

Dave: We were trying to distance ourselves from it, but the problem was the name never really took. Like every time we were doing a gig the News was always "formerly the Mods."

MRR: I remember that. Times were changing.

Scott: There were just more bands coming out that were doing things that were a little more complicated and interesting. I don't think it was a question of punk dying. I think when the Viletones split up and the Secrets formed and Leckie took all the Ugly and created the new Viletones and it was just like they were shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic. It was the same guys playing in different bands. But we...

MRR: In 1980, you guys started getting frustrated. What was starting to happen?

Dave: I think the recording was very disappointing for us and the record company shenanigans were disappointing for us and I don't think we had an appreciation at that age for how long it took for things to happen. We were very impatient and naive. It's funny because the same naivete and innocence that made the Mods

such an incredible experience for us and has left us with such good memories is the same naivete and innocence that caused us problems as kids because we couldn't wait. We thought that things had to happen quickly. But you know what? To us, we saw bands like the Police where it did happen quickly. It was like, every step that they took was boom-boom-boom and it was a period of months, not years. You gotta remember man, in those days there weren't old grey-haired 50-year-old farts playing rock 'n' roll music. You did not see that. So guys did have their success

early. Guys did have their success young and they were on their third record or fourth record or whatever. So, it's easy for us to say now that we were impatient, but the fact is that is kind of the way it was back then. That was a big, big part of the problem.

Scott: It was the first real turnover of rock 'n' roll too. I mean, finally Lennon and McCartney were getting old. The Kinks... all these guys were getting old and they were moving into different things, and you had the new bands coming in like Queen and all these studio bands that no one could even hope to sound like. It was really what punk was, giving the music back to the next generation. That's my theory on it. No one realized it in the late '70s. Now, I think you look back and you see exactly what was happening—we could not sit down and learn "Bohemian Rhapsody" and play that. We could not learn Steely Dan songs. We just did not have the virtuosity to do it. And when you're 18 or 19, you shouldn't be playing that crap. You should be playing something that means something to you.

MRR: Your last gig was at a private school, of all places. Where was the school and how did you get a gig at a private school?

Scott: That was our last gig that no one really knew about. What everyone thought was the last gig was opening for Squeeze, and then we went and did this show at the private school. Where was it? Bathurst and Bloor somewhere.

Dave: Yeah, I can't remember the name of the school.

MRR: Like UCC? Oh, Bathurst and Bloor. There is one just sort of north of Bloor, a little bit west of Bathurst. I've seen that school.

Scott: I don't know how we got it. Greg got it somehow. Someone approached Greg at a show and they brought us in and we played there and that was it.

MRR: What finally broke the Mods up for good?

Scott: Hmm, I think it was Mark's socks. (laughter) I think Mark sort of had enough and you had the offer from Bators.

Dave: I had the offer from Bators.

Scott: Greg and I were not ready to pull the plug, but...

MRR: After the Mode broke up I saw a place on the New Music where the Numbers were having a party in a basement and Greg was with them. I don't know if he was actually a member of the Numbers.

Scott: Yeah, he joined them.

MRR: And Scott, you went on to be in the Popular Spies. What about Mark, was he in any other bands?

Dave: No, You know, it's funny that when we broke up, it was kind of like me and Mark deciding to do it. Greg and Scott weren't ready to do it. So, it was like a marital couple kind of coming apart in a way. But there was always a strand of friendship that went through us and

MRR:
Yeah,
they
hated Felix
Pappalardi, I
think.

Dave: The same situation. They totally cleaned it up, whereas the first album, those were demos done with Genya Ravan and they ended up being their first Sire Records album. It was the same thing. The demos were more representative of these bands than the records that they eventually did, because people were trying to clean them up and make them commercial and I guess that is the only way the music industry responded back then, although the music industry is still horrible and always will be horrible.

MRR: Christina Hunt of the Toronto Star wrote an article on April 26th, 1979 saying that "violence, hatred, and ugliness died when punk rock crashed out. In its place are new wave bands like Toronto's the Mods, aiming to put fun back into the music." Do you agree with that statement?

Scott: That's what we told her.

Dave: You know what? I think that as much as punk was the beginning of a whole period of change, people were anxious for it to go away.

MRR: But one thing that did change around that time was that you guys changed

step out tonight

THE
MODS



has been there all these years and that's how we're still in the music right now.

MRR: Now Dave, you started with Stiv Bators and then you ended up in the Dead Boys. Is that correct?

Dave: Yeah.

MRR: So you met Stiv at the Chestnut Club, and you ended up playing on his record. Tell us what happened next.

Dave: When I met him at the Chestnut Club with the Muffs, he really liked the Muffs a lot. I went down first in the summer of 1973 to Los Angeles to record.



A couple of singles with him and one of the guys from Blue Army, which is an Ohio band, on it, and a month and a half down there. We had a whole bunch of material, most of which came out in singles and has since been re-released over the years. I then made back to Toronto and rejoined the Muffs and we played for several months while the Dead Boys went back in the road. The original fan line I had made, and when they started the following Paul's collection and I said, "Would you like to join and replace John in the Dead Boys?" So after having done their solo singles with him, that's when I joined.

MRR: And how old were you then?

Dave: When I joined Stiv I would have been 10 years old.

MRR: So your parents were pretty liberal about letting you go to play with a bunch of guys called the Dead Boys.

Dave: Yeah.

MRR: Hanging out at the Tropiana with everybody from John Balushi to Dee Dee Ramone. I know I have heard a lot of crazy stories from you. You eventually went along and were in the original line-up for Lords of the New Church with Brian James and Stiv Bators. What happened?

Dave: Well, after the end of the Dead Boys and after a lot of other stuff, I ended up coming out when James came and joined the band. We didn't have a name for the band at first.

We actually stayed some place up in the home. Partners in Crime. I just liked playing with Brian. I thought he was a great guy and really liked us getting together. We did a bunch of gigs together, and then this decision was made to go to England. I was the band was going to be managed by Mike Caplan. So I think I faced this. Because when I came back home to Toronto, I was without going to England with Stiv and Brian and I decided to come back home to Toronto.

MRR: Then you went solo. You released an album on Bomb Records which has a killer photo of you taken by Rodney Browes. Listening to the album, it is clear of your love for pop music. Did Stiv and the Dead Boys turn you into pop?

Dave: Yeah—I mean, I always liked pop music anyway. I loved the sound of pop. Jimmy Barnes is like Stiv and the Sweet and stuff, but the Dead Boys on Jimmy Zee Love, the first album on a lot of that sort of thing. It's like, okay, yeah. So that influenced me a lot. And in fact, I think a lot of guys in punk aren't what you call pop music fans. Honestly, it was just a stone's throw away. We thought punk was a language at the time, but we go back and listen to the Ramones now and it sounds like the Beach Boys.

MRR: You said "the only really beauty in music is the people who make it and the people who listen to it. Everything else sucks." You kind of hinted at that earlier. I thought it was a very interesting statement. I couldn't agree more. There is a lot of interest in the '70s Toronto punk scene now—film projects from Colin Brunton and Blair Martin, the "Funk 'til you Puke" exhibit by Will Munro, an upcoming book by Liz Worth, a photo documentary by Rodney Browes. Scott, what do you attribute this to?

Scott: It's a phenomenon. I think (laughter) New Toronto is probably outside of London and New York, had the best sound going. Maybe LA, but I don't want to think LA had much going at the time. And he's taking while he's going. I realize it and that is some history here that has been unearthed and people are going back to revisit it.

MRR: What is inspiring you guys to play again?

Dave: Funny, it was the fact that we have talked a lot about the last few years but it never materialized. Because there wasn't a unique value in anything. For me personally, it was watching the documentary New York Dolls about Arthur Kane. Watching that film just made me feel like, "You know what if we were to do this, now is the time to do it." We really went back to it now while the getting is good. Because the first is as we get older and stuff like that, it's so much more and more difficult to pull it off. And watching that film just gave me a sense. I immediately about all of this and thinking now is the time to do it. And Glen Winkler, in it was him who first called me, the former front man of the Wives and Tyminna and a whole bunch of other bands. He is also in the Sorcerer.

Scott: The Why Clots.

Dave: He had called me on it said "Would the Muffs ever consider doing something?" And I said "You know what, I think we will, because as we don't have to try to throw hours."

MRR: Can we expect any more shows after this gig?

Scott: Just the Asian tour (laughter).